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Authorized By: H. D. Brown

August 4, 1975

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Memorandum of Conversation

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DEC 3 1957

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
R/M/R

SUBJECT: IRBMs for NATO

DATE: November 22, 1957
TIME: 2-2:30 p.m.
PLACE: The White House

PARTICIPANTS: The Secretary of State
Mr. Gerard C. Smith,
Assistant Secretary
for Policy Planning
Mr. B.E.L. Timmons,
Director, EUR/RA

Mr. Neil H. McElroy, Secretary of Defense
Mr. Donald A. Quarles, Deputy Secretary
of Defense
Dr. James R. Killian, Jr., Special
Assistant to the President for
Science and Technology

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Mr. McElroy opened the conversation by saying that he had wished to discuss with the Secretary of State the question of intermediate range ballistic missiles for NATO. The Defense Department was now in a position where it could go forward with IRBMs and have them ready by late in calendar year 1958. However, this would cost a great deal more money than was presently envisaged in Defense Department budget planning.

Mr. McElroy said that it would be possible to schedule 16 squadrons of 15 missiles each, or a total of 240 missiles. These could be delivered in a period extending through calendar year 1963. The figure of 16 squadrons would include 4 squadrons which we have promised the UK.

The Secretary said that the President hoped to be in a position, at the December NATO meeting, to say that we were moving ahead with the project to supply IRBMs to NATO. It would obviously be desirable to indicate that delivery of the first squadron could be effected at the end of calendar year 1958 or early in calendar 1959.

Mr. Quarles

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Mr. Quarles reviewed the timing that had been envisaged for the deployment of the 4 squadrons that have been promised to the British. Originally, we had hoped to have an "emergency capability" established in US hands in July 1958, with one operational squadron established by July 1959, and all 4 squadrons established by July 1960. Presently we are thinking of the first squadron to be established in the UK by July 1959 and three additional squadrons established in the calendar year 1960.

Mr. McElroy said that the "speed-up" to which he had referred could be accomplished, but that it would be "expensive". He inquired whether there would be any substantial gain in terms of foreign policy if the speed-up were undertaken. He said he wished to make clear that any such speed-up would be undertaken only for the reasons of the State Department, and not for the reasons of the Defense Department. However, Defense would of course support State "up to the hilt". Mr. McElroy went on to say that as ICBMs and the "Polaris" IRBM come into operational use, and as the bomber force is progressively equipped with B-58s, there would not be the same military importance, from the US point of view, to having IRBMs in Western Europe over and above the minimum number needed to make our NATO allies feel they are defended.

The Secretary inquired when a decision would be needed if it were decided to attempt to establish the first IRBM squadron in NATO Europe by the end of calendar year 1958.

Mr. Quarles replied that such a decision would have to be taken by December 1, 1957. Mr. Quarles also referred to the fact that General Norstad had stressed the great importance of the US saying something positive on IRBMs for NATO at the December meeting. General Norstad had said that this could be quite a key point. The Secretary agreed.

Mr. Quarles said that taking into account the IRBM commitment to the British, it appeared that the first deployment of IRBMs on the Continent could not be effected before July 1960. Mr. Quarles had previously referred to the possibility of establishing a squadron in France in mid-1959. The Secretary remarked on this difference. Mr. Quarles explained that if an IRBM squadron were to be established in Europe earlier than July 1960, this would cause a change in the scheduled deployment of IRBMs to the UK.

Mr. Quarles said that he recognized that there needed to be some specific and reassuring statement at the December meeting regarding IRBMs for the Continental NATO countries. It would probably be possible to have a squadron ready for NATO by April 1, 1959 if Defense proceeded "down the 2-missile road", i.e., that it pressed ahead with the production of two separate IRBMs (presumably the Thor and Jupiter). Mr. Quarles went on to say that this would cost a great

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great deal of money and would be "over and above" the funds that have been discussed with the President for fiscal year 1959. Mr. McElroy said that to move the target date for IRBMs for NATO from the end of calendar year 1959 forward by 6-9 months would cost a great deal of money.

The Secretary then spoke of the need to reassure our NATO allies regarding the US capabilities in the missile field. He said that it was recognized that there would be lengthy negotiations required for SACEUR to work out the details of where IRBMs made available to NATO would actually be deployed. Even after such negotiations are completed, myriad details would have to be settled, including such questions as preparations of bases, training of troops in the handling of IRBMs, financing, etc. He thought that it would be perfectly possible for the US to make a general statement that the US would be in a position to deliver IRBMs to NATO during the latter part of calendar year 1959, and that we could assure our NATO allies that when they were ready to receive the missiles we would be in a position to deliver them.

Messrs. McElroy and Quarles indicated their assent to such a formula.

At this point the discussion ended as the NSC meeting was about to begin.

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S/P - Mr. Smith

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